

EWING • GARBETT • WOODARD

# LOKI

AGENT OF ASGARD



## THIS IS THE STORY OF LOKI.

A STORY THAT BEGAN WITH ODIN, SON OF BOR, BROTHER TO VILI, VE AND CUL THE SERPENT. FIRST THE PRINCE OF ASGARD -- IN THE TIME BEFORE TIME, THE TIME OF LEGENDS -- AND THEN ITS KING. IT WAS DURING HIS REIGN THAT ODIN ADOPTED LOKI, SON OF THE FROST GIANT LAUFHEY.

LOKI, WHO BECAME GOD OF EVIL. LOKI, WHO IS TRYING TO CHANGE.

LOKI, WHO RECENTLY ACQUIRED GRAM, THE SWORD OF TRUTH, ORIGINALLY WIELDED BACK DURING THE TIME OF LEGENDS BY SIGURD THE EVER-GLORIOUS, (WHO STILL WANDERS THE EARTH TODAY.)

LOKI, WHO HAS STRUCK A BARGAIN WITH THE ALL-MOTHER -- THE RULING TRIUMVIRATE OF ASGARDIA. TASKS PERFORMED IN RETURN FOR ABSOLUTION.

BUT, AS LOKI KNOWS DEEP IN HIS HEART, SOME CRIMES CANNOT BE ABSOLVED.

AND NOW THERE IS ANOTHER LOKI, WHO ARRIVED IN ASGARDIA BY FOUL MEANS TO MAKE THE ALL-MOTHER A PROPOSITION OF HIS OWN. AN OLDER LOKI, WHO IS, IN HIS OWN WAY...

...THE AGENT OF ASGARD.

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### THIS IS THE STORY OF LOKI'S LETTER COLUMN.

THERE CAME A DAY WHEN MARVEL SOLD ALL ITS AD-SPACE -- A NOBLE FEAT, BUT ONE THAT CAME AT A GREAT PRICE. FOR 'TWAS NO ROOM FOR A LETTER COLUMN THIS MONTH OR NEXT.

BUT READERS WERE STILL ENTREATED TO SEND LETTERS TO [MHEROES@MARVEL.COM](mailto:MHEROES@MARVEL.COM), AND WHAT'S MORE, THEY COULD JOURNEY TO [WWW.MARVEL.COM](http://WWW.MARVEL.COM) RIGHT THIS VERY MOMENT AND SEE SUCH MISSIVES ANSWERED -- VERILY, E'EN BY THE CREATIVE TEAM THEMSELVES, THOUGH NOT IN THIS MERRIE COD-MEDIEVAL CADENCE, FOR 'TIS STARTING TO SOUND A BIT JILLY.

HEY HONNY HONNY,

**MEANWHILE...**  
A DANK, DARK CELL IN  
THE DEPTHS OF ASGARDIA.

DRIVE  
VICARS,  
VERITY.

OH, HOW  
DENSE.

WHAT A  
PRECIOUS  
LITTLE GIRL-  
CHILD I AM.

PHUFF

ENOUGH.

THE ALL-  
MOTHER HAS  
AFFORDED ME A  
FINE CELL--AND ONE  
WITHOUT DOORS. A  
SURE SIGN OF THEIR  
TRUST IN MY  
COUNSEL--

--BUT  
A GOD OF  
EVIL CANNOT  
BE IDLE  
FOREVER.

CRICK

TIME  
RUNS, THE CLOCK  
WILL STRIKE, THE  
FUTURE WILL COME.  
PREPARATIONS  
MUST BE  
MADE.

TO  
WORK, OLD  
CRICKSTER.

SS  
WOOF

1 This is the story of Loki.

2 A story between drafts, in the process of being rewritten.

3 Loki wanders the world, performing the All-Mother's missions, earning his rewards--old crimes forgotten. Parts of the story erased.

4 The story is in flux. Gaps form in the narrative, through which a new story may be written. A new story...

5 ...of the past.

# Your Life Is A Story I've Already Written

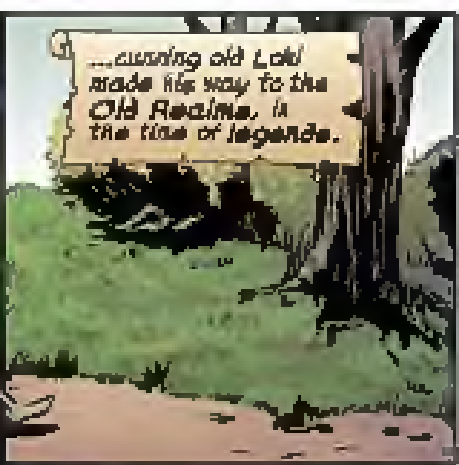
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Once upon a time...



...cunning old Loki made his way to the Old Realm, in the time of legends.



Where he met a princeling of those long-ago days, on the road to seek his fortune.



HO!

I RUN MORE WHEN I AM THAN WHEN I AM NOT. I BLUSH LIKE A ROSE WHEN I AM NOT, AND I SMELL EVEN AFTER I BATH.

WHO AM I?

WHY... I KNOW NOT.

NO, OHN BORSON?

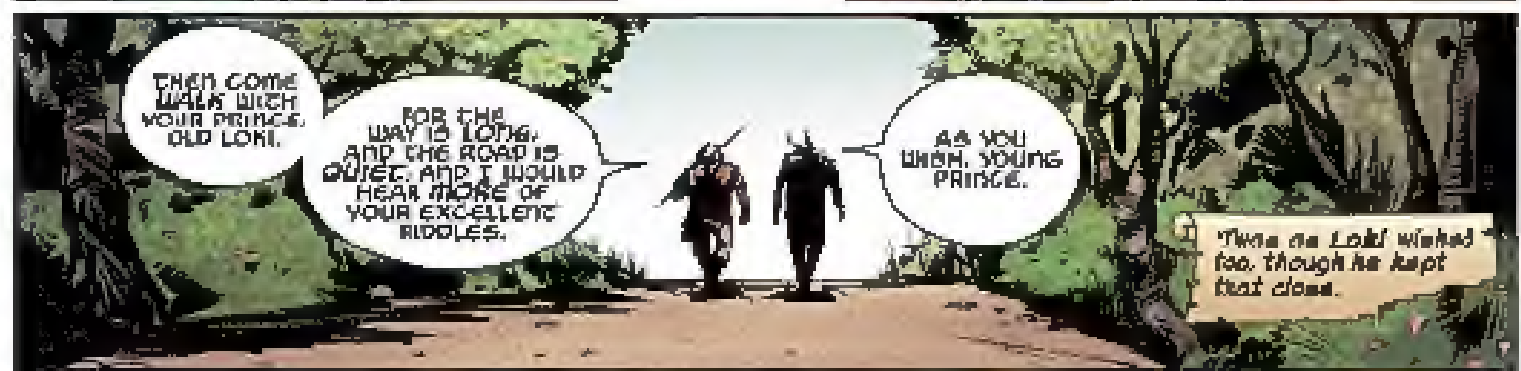


SURELY I AM AS PLAIN AS THE NOSE ON YOUR FACE?

HAY YOU KNOW ME THEN, OLD ONE?

WHAT FELLOW OF ASGARD DOES NOT KNOW HIS PRINCE?

AS FOR ME, I AM LOKI--A HUMBLE TELLER OF TALL TALES, SMALL MISCHIEFS, AND RIDDLES.



THEN COME WALK WITH YOUR PRINCE, OLD LOKI.

FOR THE WAY IS LONG, AND THE ROAD IS QUIET, AND I WOULD HEAR MORE OF YOUR EXCELLENT RIDDLES.

AS YOU WISH, YOUNG PRINCE.

Thus as Loki wished too, though he kept that close.



Shortly thereafter, the two came to a running river--and there beheld a strange sight.

An otter, large as a man.

!NEEEEN?



The beast beheld them of its turn, and nodded its head once--as to say, "Good day, fine gentiofolk."

!NEEE-EEEN?

'TIS TRULY A WONDROUS CREATURE...I

Aye.



THUNK

!NABUKK!

WONDROUS.

LOKI--!

But the deed was done, and 'twas no return from it.

And otter meat has a fine, strong taste.



Still, Odin was troubled.

THE OTTER BADE US NO IL, LOKI. WHAT MADE YOU DO SUCH A THING?

THE MISCHIEF IN ME, ODIN BORSON.



BUT WAS NOT THE MEAT GOOD, PRITCE? IS NOT THE FUR LUSTROUS?

SEE! IT HAS MADE GOOD CLOAKS FOR US BOTH!

So Odin let his worries pass.

Later, as the day grew long and the air grew chill...

HO!

TRAVELERS!

...the two gods came to the inn of Hriedman, of the Vanir, and his three sons.

RIGHT SORRY AM I THAT MY THIRD SON, OER THE CHANGER OF SHAPES, HAS NOT YET JOINED US...

O-O-OK! CHANGER OF SHAPES?

AHE! HIS MA WAS A WITCH OF SVARTALFHEIM, AND HE HAS THE TALENT BY BIRTH.

I SENT HIM OUT AS A RIVER-BEAST, FOR TO CATCH OUR SUPPER. 'TIS NOT LIKE HIM AS TO BE SO LATE...

LOKI-- WE SHOULD TAKE OUR LEAVE--

SAY NOT SO, LAD! THE NIGHT IS COLD, OUR FIRE IS WARM-- WHY WOULD A BEARY VOYAGER WISH TO LEAVE US?

I KNOW THE WHY OF IT!

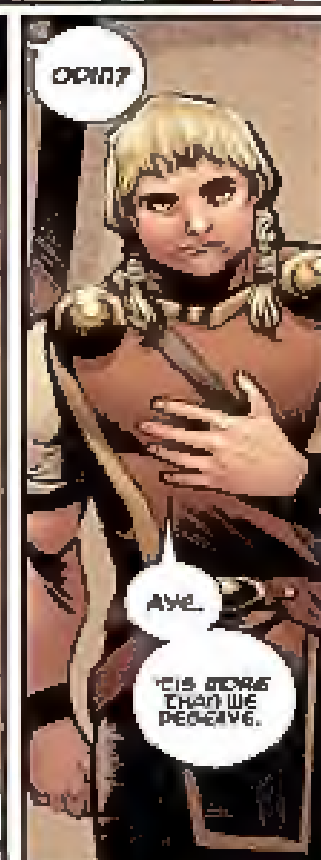
THEY WEAR IT ON THEIR BACKS!

THE SKIN OF OUR DEAD BROTHER, OER--

--MURDERED BY THEIR HAND!

UHAC--?!

'Twas an ill hour for Bor's son.





Now, 'twas but one hoard of gold that could cover such fine otter-skins with no hair showing.

The hoard of Andvari The Dwarf—a treasure taken in the very forming-days of Nidavellir, and greatest in the realm.

So vast and valuable it was, that Andvari could not let it pass from his sight for a moment, lest it vanish away.

And so, with magic, Andvari took the shape of a giant pile—so strong and slippery that neither hook nor net nor magic could land him.

Until Loki came.

WHO GOES THERE?

LOKI AM I—LIAR, ERICKSEER, AND COME FOR YOUR GOLD! SO FORK IT OVER, OLD FISH!

HAI WHY SHOULD I, LIAR? HAVE YOU ROD OR NET OR HANDS THAT CAN CATCH ME?

I HAVE NONE.

AND HAVE YOU ANY SPELL THAT CAN HOLD OR COMPEL ME?

NONE THAT I AM.

THEN WHAT HAVE YOU, LOKI THE LIAR?

ONE OF THESE

And Loki reached deep into his carrying-bag...

...and brought out an M20 recoilless rocket launcher.

**BOOM**

**AWK!**

**BOOOOOOOOOOO**

For Andvari could only guard against what he could think of. And wise as he was in the ways of magic...

...he was somewhat unimaginative.

INJUSTICE! MURDER AND THEFT! AND ALL WILL KNOW IT, LOKI THE LIAR!

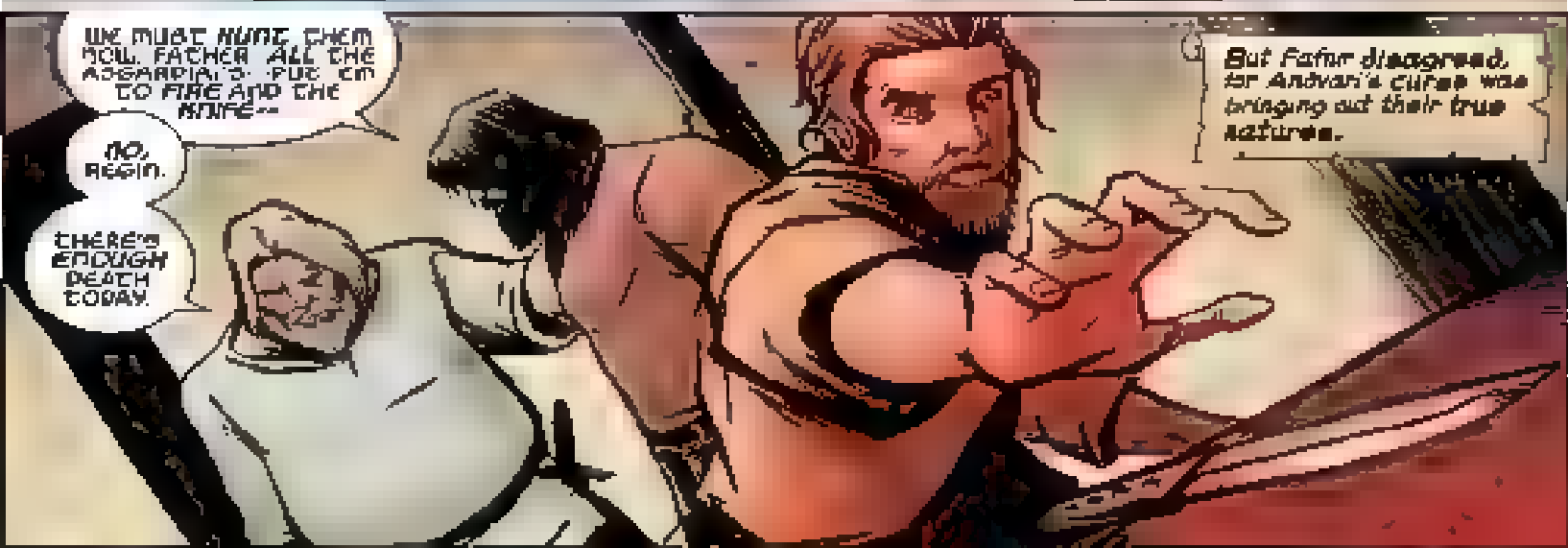
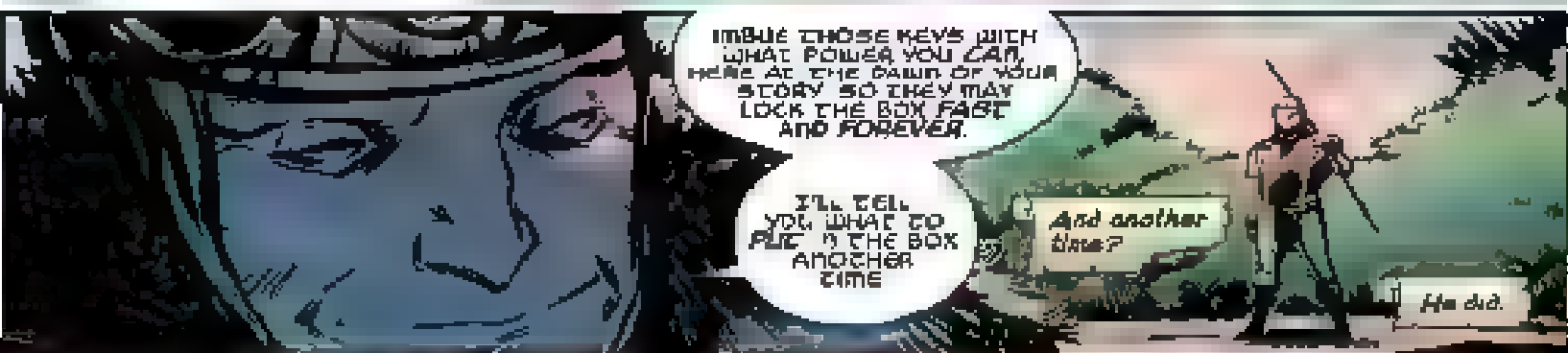
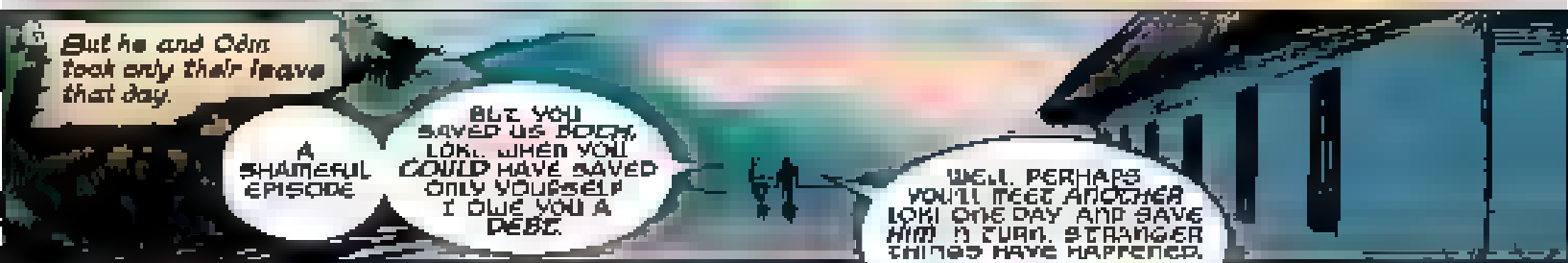
GO ON...

MY DEATH-CURSE ON THIS GOLD-MAY BE FORCE ENOUGH UPON ALL!

SO ALL WILL KNOW HOW FOUL LOKI MURDERED POOR ANDVARI...NO MACEER...

...NO MACEER HOD HE UES...

And such a curse might have troubled Loki...



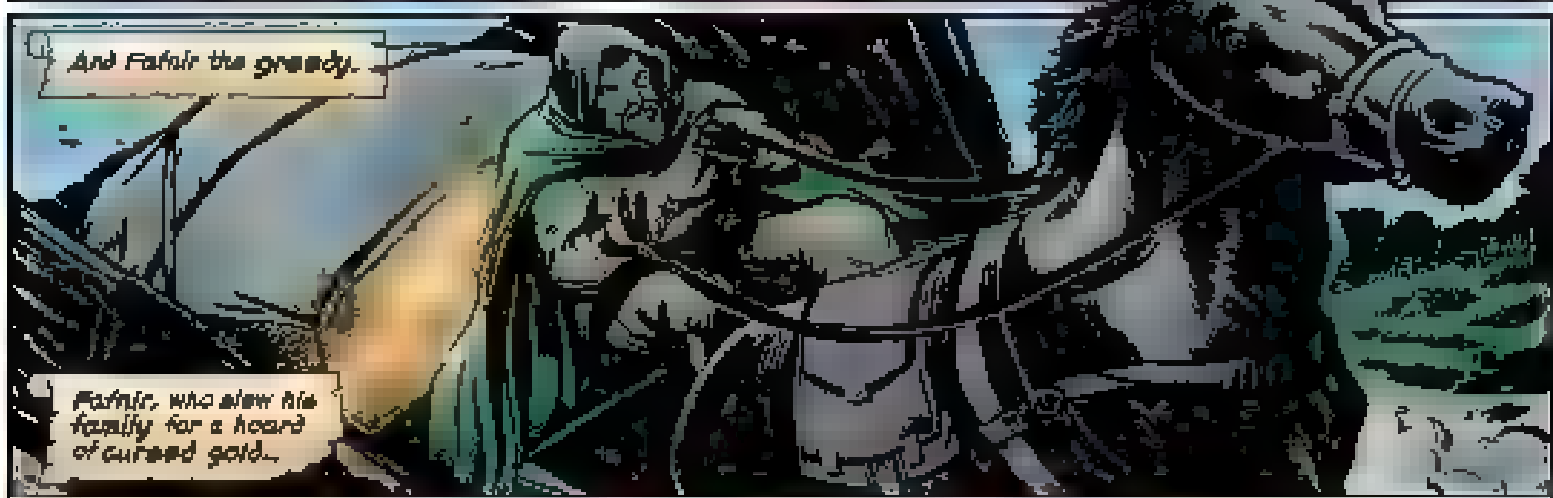


Heilmann the forgiving.

Regin the vengeful.

FATHER... MY BROTHER.

I WILL SEE YOU DEAD.



And Fafnir the greedy.

Fafnir, who slew his family for a hoard of cursed gold...



...or so he supposed.

For vengeance is a hard thing to murder entirely.

I WILL SEE YOU DEAD, FATHER. BY MY HAND, OR BY MY SWORD IN ANOTHER'S.

YOU AND HIGH-NOSED ASGAR BOTH.



The brothers were thus resolved, each to their own obsession.

HA HA HA GOLD! BEAUTIFUL GOLD!

I'LL NEVER LEAVE YOU.



Regin tempered his vengeance, forging and tempering it like a thing of steel.

I NAME THEE GRAM, FATHER'S DEATH.

AND ASGAR'S BANE.



And Fafnir  
tended his gold.

Like Andvari before him,  
he could not leave it—  
aye, even for a moment.

And so his body—  
starved for food  
and water—drank  
of curse—magic  
to survive.

Andvari's great truth-  
spell seeped into Fafnir's  
blood and his bones...


And changed  
him.

Aye, with his outside  
matched his true inside.

Until Fafnir was as he'd  
always been: an ugly  
monster squatting in  
a bed of his own making.

A great and  
hideous dragon...

Waiting for a  
heroic prince  
to end him.



And now Sigurd  
The Ever-Glorious  
enters our tale.

Sigurd, first hero of  
Asgard's legends, and  
to some the greatest.

Sigurd, who shrank not from  
impossible odds--be they  
on the battlefield...

...or other places.

A new chapter, that.  
Once upon a time.

«Though his heart  
opened to none, and  
his false promises  
were the bane  
of his glory.»

... Sigurd the sometimes-  
doubtful rode alone through  
the Old Realm, to come  
upon the Inn of Regin  
Hrimdmarson.



WHO KNOWS A  
HERO OF ASGARD  
WHEN HE CAN  
EYES ON A DRAGON

NO,  
HERO.

WHAT DAYS  
YOU IF I KNOW  
A DRAGON IN  
NEED OF  
SLAYING?

ONE  
WHO GUARDS  
THE GREATEST  
GOLD HOARD  
IN ALL THE  
REALMS?

I'D LET ME  
DRINK IN PEACE  
WITHOUT YOUR  
CALL TALES O  
WINEKEEPER.

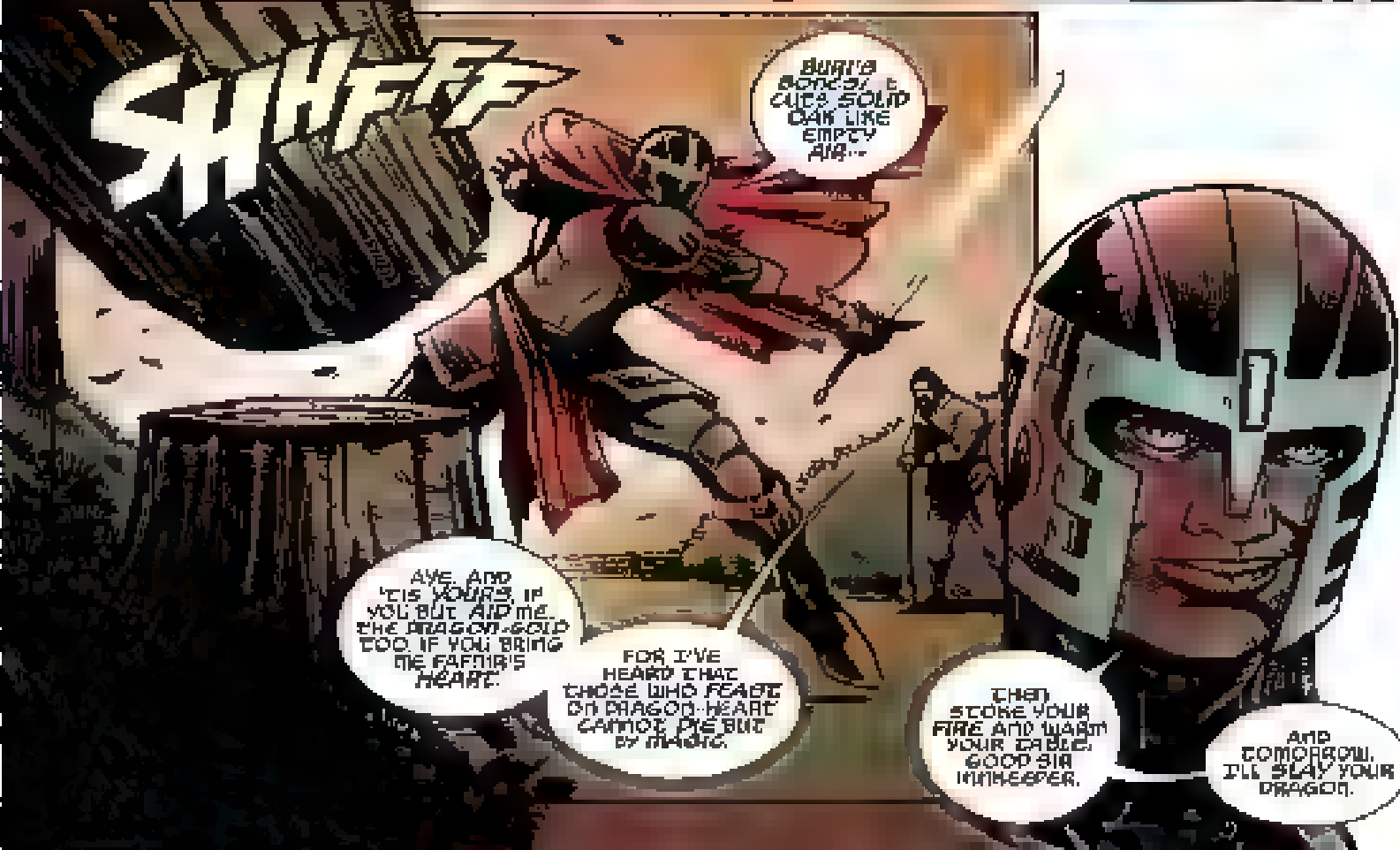


PEACE  
I'LL KNOW  
NOT WHILE  
THAT BEAST  
LIVES.

YEARS SPENT  
I SEARCHING  
FOR ITS LAIR, AND A  
SWORD I DID FORGE--  
ONE THAT CUTS  
DRAGON-AND LIKE  
BUTTER.

BUT WITH  
THIS LAME LEG  
I'LL NOT GET  
CLOSE ENOUGH  
TO DOWNING IT

NO  
PROMISES,  
BUT SHOW  
ME THE  
SWORD.



BURNING  
BONDS, I  
CUT A SOLID  
OAK LIKE  
EMPTY  
AIR--

AYE, AND  
'TIS YOURS, IF  
YOU BUT AID ME.  
THE DRAGON-GOLD  
TOO, IF YOU BRING  
ME FAFNIR'S  
HEART.

FOR I'VE  
HEARD THAT  
THOSE WHO FEARE  
ON DRAGON-HEART  
CANNOT DIE BUT  
BY MAGIC.

THEN  
STOKE YOUR  
FIRE AND WARM  
YOUR EMBLE,  
GOOD SIR  
WINEKEEPER.

AND  
TOMORROW,  
I'LL SLAY YOUR  
DRAGON.

1 And on the morrow, he did.





Some say when Fafnir fell, his spilled blood formed a pool from which the king of Nidavard drank years later and became his twin.

It keeps the stories straight for Fafnir is in many.

But to hold to Sigurd's tale-- the hoard of Andvari was his, and the crown too. And more of that soon.

Sigurd let the gold be, as none would be fool enough to steal it from him. He took but two things from that dark cave.

The dragon's blood-- which sprayed across him from the death-wound, thick enough to taste.

and the dragon's heart, which he roasted whole for that very day's supper.

SIGURD

BEINARD

DID YOU SAY  
SOMETHING  
AGAIN?

NOT

ABGARDIAN



YOU HAVE  
TASTED THE  
BLOOD OF  
FAMIR, O  
SIGURD.

BLOOD THICK  
WITH A CURSE  
THAT BRINGS OUT  
THE TRUTH IN ALL  
THINGS, SUCH  
AS BIRD-  
SPEECH.

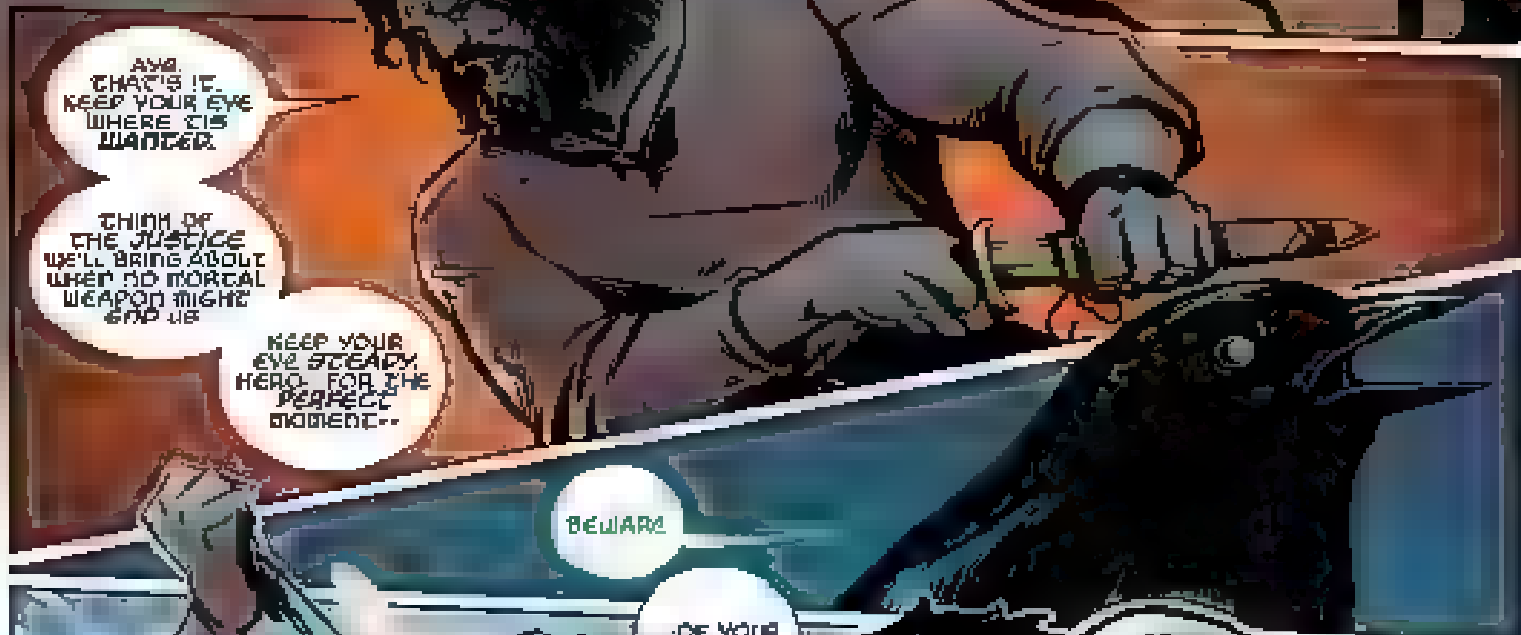
SIGURD.

BEWARE.

BEGIN  
THAT  
MASPIS.

TURN YOUR  
EYES TO THE  
SPIC. WE MUST  
EAT THE HEART  
THE VERY  
MOMENT  
IT IS DONE.

IF YOU  
INSIST.



AND  
THAT'S IT.  
KEEP YOUR EYE  
WHERE IT'S  
WANTED.

THINK OF  
THE JUSTICE  
WE'LL BRING ABOUT  
WHEN NO MORTAL  
WEAPON MIGHT  
END US.

KEEP YOUR  
EYE STEADY.  
HERE, FOR THE  
PERFECT  
MOMENT--

BEWARE.

OF YOUR  
DEATH--



OH.

Gram's blade, steeped as it had  
been in truth-cursed blood, was now  
as piercing as the truth itself.

Thus, even such a grievous wound  
as this was not a mortal one.  
Most often, the truth only hurts.

But Regla's truth was terrible indeed.

OH.

NO.

He'd thought himself an avenger, wringing justice for his family-- from Fafnir and any Asgardian he crossed the path of.

But Grane told him a truth hidden even from himself.

That there was no justice in him. He was a killer who'd found his excuse to kill--and that was all.

That was the truth that stopped his heart.

AND NOW, SWORD?

FOUL?

EAT THE DRAGON'S HEART? BECOME UNMORTAL AS TWICE THE HERO YOU EVER WERE.

MAKE YOUR NEW SWORD A THING OF LEGEND IF THE TIME LEFT TO YOU.

THE TIME LEFT TO ME?

NOT LONG FIRST HERO OF ASGARD.

NOT LONG AT ALL.

The magpie was a teller of falsehoods, but there were none in that.

For the years passed--and one day Sigmund's own true heart caught up to him.

When Sigurd ran from Asgard, leaving his magic sword behind, it was said he did it to escape the wrath of Bor, the king, father of young Prince Odin.

But truly, he ran to escape his obligations.

You may enjoy more of this tale in *Journey Into Mystery #638*, should you wish it.

Bor himself died some years after

and few mourned him.

WHAT, WHAT NOW, GIL?

BROTHER, WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

I SUPPOSE THAT, I AM THE ALM FATHER,

AND I SHALL RULE

But among Bor's effects—boxed up, long forgotten—lay Grim.

Forged by Regin. Bathed in Fafnir's blood. Coined to legend by Sigurd The Ever-Glorious.

The hero's blade, and Asgard's bane.

HAH, PRINCE ODIN

Ready at last for its real purpose.





THE  
TIME HAS  
COME

...TO  
REMEMBER  
YOUR  
DEBT.

THE OLD  
MAD OF  
RIDDLES--

LOKI, ODIN  
BORSON, NOT  
THAT YOU'LL  
REMEMBER.

AND THERE  
IS MY SWORD,  
MADE FROM MAGIC  
AND TIME AND  
BECOME MADE TO MY  
SPECIFICATIONS.



REMEMBER THE BOX  
YOU BUILT FOR ME? PLACE  
THE SWORD IN IT, LOCK  
THE FIVE LOCKS,  
SCATTER THE  
FIVE KEYS.

YOU'LL  
FORGET EXACTLY  
WHO TOLD YOU TO.  
I KNOW HOW THIS  
DARNER OF STORY  
WORKS.

BUT THE  
LEGEND WILL  
SPREAD, AND GROW.



A HERO'S  
BLADE, LOCKED  
AWAY WITH KEYS  
FORGED BY ODIN  
HIMSELF...

FOR  
LOKI.

I--I  
WILL DO IT,  
FOR IT HARMS  
NO ONE,  
BUT--

--WHO  
IS THAT  
OLD ONE?



THIS?

THIS  
IS NO  
ONE, ODIN  
BORSON.



NO ONE  
IMPORTANT.

ENOUGH  
HE WILL  
BE BORN--  
OH, YES.



VERY

VERY

GOOD

**UP A MOUNTAIN,  
REDUX. THE PRESENT DAY.**

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF

HUFF...

OH,  
COME ON,  
SERIOUSLY?

SERIOUSLY?  
HE GOT HERE  
ALREADY? HOW  
DID HE EVEN  
KNOW?

IT'S ONLY  
BEEN A COUPLE  
DOZEN MILLENNIA--  
I MEAN, I BARELY  
FOUND OUT ABOUT IT  
MYSELF AND I'D  
LOST MY DAMN  
SWORD--

PARTIC:

OKAY, YOU  
KNOW WHAT? LOOK'S  
GOT MY SWORD--THAT'S  
NO PROBLEM, THAT'S FINE.

**SIGURD, THE  
SOMETIMES-GLORIOUS,**

I'LL JUST  
GO STEAL IT  
BACK.

**NEXT: OF COURSE YOU  
REALIZE THIS MEANS WAR.**



